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THE

ALARM BELL.

1869.

A WORD TO FIREMEN.

"The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness." 2 *Peter* iii. 10, 11.

"It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not." *Lamentations* iii. 22.

PUBLISHED FOR GRATUITOUS CIRCULATION, BY A FRIEND OF FIREMEN.

PHILADELPHIA:

J. S. HELFENSTEIN PR. THIRD ST. ABOVE CHESTNUT.

1858.

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MAY 6 1891

THE ALARM BELL.

My brother, when in the dead of night you hear the alarm bell, you arise, and hurry to your Engine or Hose House. Neither rain nor storm, nor biting cold, can hold you back. You throw open the doors, seize the rope, and though you have only a few comrades, you drag your apparatus into the street, and hasten towards the scene of conflagration. You turn, perhaps, a corner, and see the lurid glare of a burning edifice. Your heart bounds within you; and infusing new energy into your panting

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companions, you rush onward. In the upper story of that burning house you see one of its inmates appear at a window, while the fiery flames surge around, and beneath, and above him. All hope of escape is cut off, except by leaping to the ground, which will be certain death. What will you do? Would you not shout, "There's a man in that building! quick!—a ladder! save him! save him?" Would you stay to reflect whether the wall might not fall while you are rearing the ladder, and he be killed after all, and your own life endangered, or perhaps sacrificed? No, my brother! were any fireman in your company to reason thus, you would turn him out of your society as unfit for an associate.

Thus do I feel for you, my beloved fireman. I feel that you are a man

of noble heart and generous nature. You risk your life to save our property from the flames, and your reward is the consciousness of having performed a praiseworthy action. You ask no more. Whatever you do, you do with all your might. You are no half-way, half-hearted man; and, let me tell you, you exert a mighty influence. That influence should be for good, but it is not always directed in that channel. Some of you use your power in a wrong direction. When this is the case it impairs your usefulness. It is like a great gash in your hose, which lets half the water escape and run down the street without reaching the fire.

There is only one way of setting right this whole matter. To my mind you are like the man in the burning

building. You endeavor to save his body, and you yourself have an *immortal soul* to save. Now, while you are here among us, we want you to attend to the salvation of your soul. You are in far greater peril than the poor fellow who entreats you to save him, as the fierce flames rage and roar around him. His is a peril of body, yours is a peril of soul. That soul is worth more than all the property on the face of the earth. "*What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?*"

My brother, you have within you a soul that can never die. That soul must either be saved or lost forever. To be saved from eternal death and everlasting burning, it is necessary that you trust yourself entirely to the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ, who

alone can save you. He is more ready to save you than you are ready to come to him. He says, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out. Now is the accepted time, behold, *now* is the day of salvation." Not to-morrow—not next month—not a more convenient season—but *this moment.*

Do you ask me *how* to be saved? *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved.* Have just as much faith in his promise as you have in your own existence. You are now in danger, and every hour brings you nearer your grave. Suppose, when you plant your ladder against that burning house, and cry to that man at the upper window, "Escape! es-

cape!" he should ask you whether he might not go back and *sleep* a little while, and then avail himself of your assistance, would you not call him insane? Of course you would. The Bible says, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish?"

Christ came, not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. If we had not all been sinners, there would have been no need of a Saviour. Look at the sacrifice made by the Son of God. He died that *you* might live. Bring it home to your own heart. Never again take that sacred name in vain. You, *you*, a guilty sinner, may find joy and peace in that bleeding, forgiving Saviour. He bids you come. Do not fear the ridicule of your fellow men. They reviled the Son of God. Instead of being ashamed to acknow-

ledge Jesus, we should much rather rejoice that he is not ashamed to own such poor miserable sinners as ourselves. Do not say, "I am too wicked to come." Though your sins be of the deepest dye he can make you clean. "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Brother, you must die! It is a solemn thing to live, and a fearful thing to die, without a hope in Christ. I often pass your Engine and Hose houses, and see them craped, and your apparatus covered with mourning, for the death of one of your company.

Perhaps a falling wall crushed him, and you dug his body from the smouldering ruins, a bruised and bleeding corpse. He may have had a widowed and sorrowing mother, whose great grief was that her son did not love the Saviour. She may have thought of the horrors that hang around the second death. Life is very uncertain; and you know not that you will see to-morrow. DEATH may take you by the hand, and lead you, as you go forth. *Prepare to die!* Be ready for death, and it will not come one moment the earlier on that account. Perhaps you, too, had a praying mother—one who took your infant hand in her own, and as you knelt in your early childhood, and laid your head upon her knee, taught you to say "Our Father which art in heaven."

Would it not gladden her heart to see you come, in the flush and strength of your manhood, and give yourself to your Saviour?

Come *now* to Jesus! Come just as you are, for you will never grow better by staying away. Cast yourself at his feet, and with a broken heart cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" Go into some secret place, where no eye but God's can see you, and no ear but God's can hear you, and on your bended knees ask forgiveness for your sins, and that your heart may be sealed for Christ. God is a hearer and answerer of prayer. He binds up the broken hearted, and listens to the cries of the penitent. Go now, my brother, and begin to serve God. Do not wait for a more convenient season, for it may never come. You will find his

yoke easy, and his burden light. Take the Bible, the word of God, and read it carefully. Read the story of Christ's love, and see how willing he was to heal every poor trembling mortal who came to him. He never turns any away empty, who come in sincerity. He is as willing now as ever, and whispers to your heart "COME!"

One word before we part, brother firemen. After death there is a JUDGMENT. We must meet at the bar of God. It will then be too late to repent—*too late, too late!* Before that Judge the heavens will be rolled together as a scroll, and the elements will melt with fervent heat. The earth will be burned up. That will be an awful conflagration. All who have ever lived, or now live, or will live, must be gathered together at

that last great day. The graves will open, the ocean will give up its dead, and all the dead shall rise. You will be there, and I will be there. You will be judged, and so must I. Oh, do not *reject* Christ's offer of salvation! If you refuse him, you will be of that despairing and lost company who shall go away into everlasting burning—into the blackness of darkness forever, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched!

Yes, come to Jesus, my brother, that you may be happy while you live on earth, and happy in eternity. *Eternity* is a solemn word—it means *forever!* It means a world that knows no end—a world of anguish and despair for the lost, or a world of pure happiness for the ransomed in Jesus!

In that bright heaven of light, there is no sin or sorrow.

Oh there, there, in that purified and glorified throng, who praise around the throne, may we meet—saved as repentant sinners, and washed in the blood of Christ's forgiving righteousness, to wear crowns of life that never fade away!

(Feb., 1891, 20,000)